Syracuse Builders Exchange
FOUNDED 1872

BIE SAFETY ADVISOR

SAFE & SOUND Week

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Safe workplaces are sound businesses.

Every workplace should have a safety and health program that includes **management leadership, worker participation, and a systematic approach to finding and fixing hazards.**

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the rate of worker deaths and reported injuries in the United States has decreased by more than 60 percent in the past four decades since the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act was passed. However, in 2025 5,283 workers were killed on the job (a rate of 15 per day), and more than 3.2 million suffer a serious job-related injury or illness.

Safety and health programs help businesses:

- Prevent workplace injuries and illnesses.
- Improve compliance with laws and regulations.
- Reduce costs, including significant reductions in workers' compensation premiums.
- Engage workers.
- Enhance social responsibility goals.
- Increase productivity and enhance overall business operations.

When management leadership is sincere and is supported by actions, workers know that safety and health are important to business success. This means that the steps they take to improve safety and health will be valued by the business.

Top management demonstrates its commitment in many different ways, including:

- Developing and communicating a safety and health policy statement.
- Providing the resources needed to implement and operate the program.
- Factoring safety and health into operational planning and decisions.
- Recognizing or rewarding safety and health contributions and achievements.
- Leading by example, by practicing safe behaviors and making safety part of daily conversations.

Workers often know the most about potential hazards associated with their jobs. When they are involved in finding solutions, they feel invested in the program. To maximize participation, however, workers must feel free of any fear of retaliation or discrimination for reporting an injury or hazardous conditions.

Workers can participate in many ways, including:

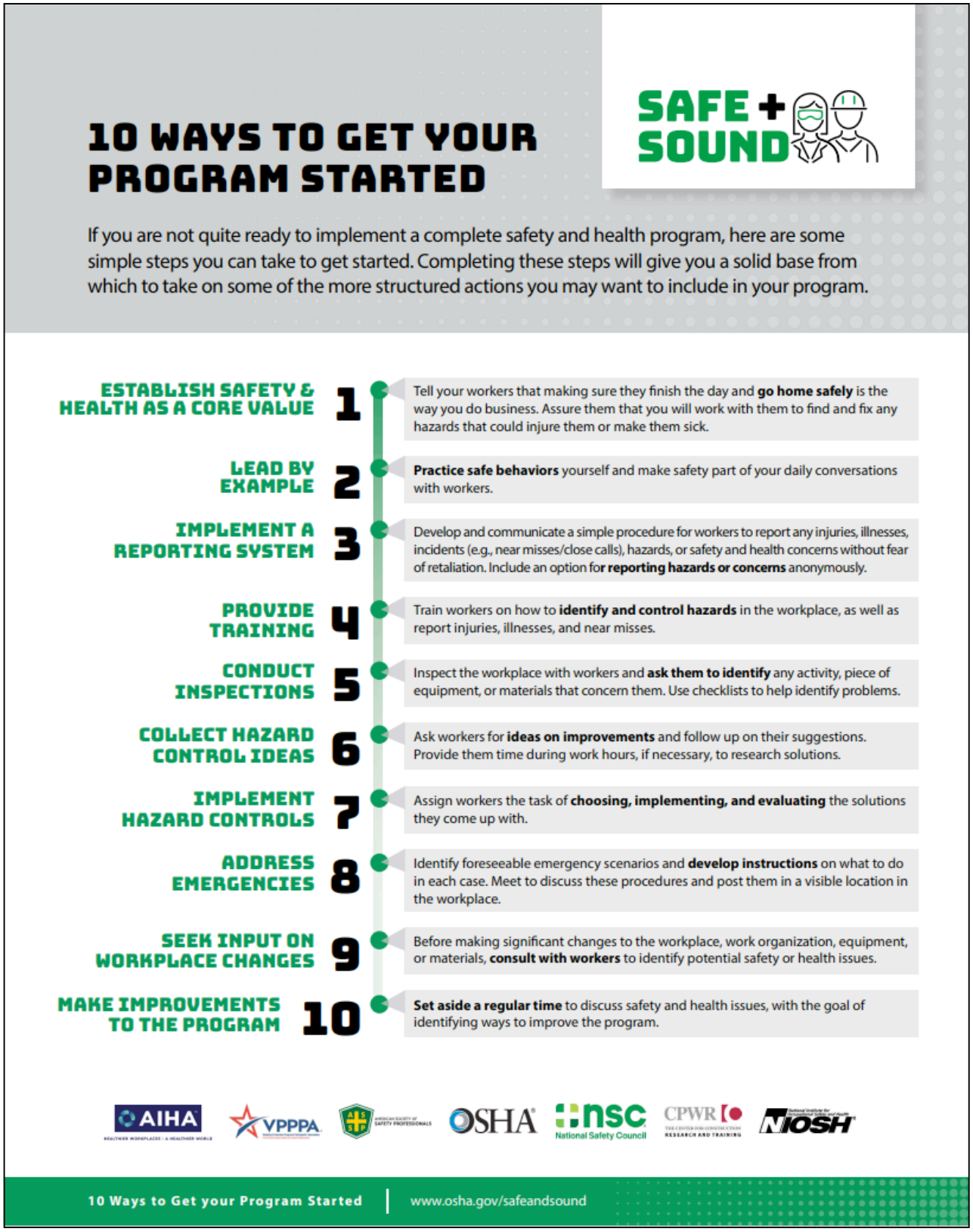
- Developing the initial program design.
- Reporting incidents (including near misses) so they can be investigated.
- Analyzing hazards associated with routine and non-routine jobs, tasks, and processes.
- Defining and documenting safe work practices.
- Conducting site inspections and incident investigations.
- Training current coworkers and new hires.
- Evaluating program performance and identifying ways to improve it.

Traditional approaches to finding and fixing workplace hazards are often reactive. Finding and fixing hazards using a proactive approach, before they cause injury or illness, is far more effective.

A systematic find and fix approach means:

- Involving workers, who often have the best understanding of the conditions that create hazards and insights into how they can be controlled.
- Reviewing all available information about hazards that might be present.
- Conducting inspections to identify new or emerging hazards.
- Investigating incidents to identify root causes and potential solutions.
- Evaluating options using the "hierarchy of controls."
- Considering how to protect workers during emergencies and non-routine activities.
- Checking that existing controls are intact and remain effective.

Monthly Toolbox Talk



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